

REMARKS

Claims 12-20, 22 and 23 are pending in the present application and are rejected. Claim 12 is herein amended. Claims 13, 14 and 23 are herein cancelled without prejudice. New claim 24 is added herein. No new matter has been added.

Applicants' Response to Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112

Claims 12-20, 22 and 23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point and distinctly claim the subject matter regarded as the invention.

It is the position of the Office Action that that the term "enhanced" of claim 12 is not defined in the specification. Additionally, it is the position of the Office Action that there is insufficient antecedent basis for "the sidewall" and "the amount of the molding material" in claim 12. Applicants herein amend claim 12 to remove these recitations added in the previous amendment. Thus, this rejection is moot. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Applicants' Response to Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 12-20, 22 and 23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Kondo et al. (WO 01/98067) in view of Shimada et al. (WO 02/090098).

It is the position of the Office Action that Kondo discloses the embodiments as claimed, with the exception of teaching that the core supply step is precedent to the outer layer supply step as recited by claim 14. The Office Action relies on Shimada to provide this teaching.

In response, Applicants herein amend claim 12 to incorporate the subject matter of claim 14. Applicants respectfully submit that neither Kondo nor Shimada discloses the embodiment of amended claim 12. Amended claim 12 corresponds to the embodiment illustrated in Fig. 2 or Fig. 3 of the present application, in which a first outer layer supply step is not performed prior to the core supply step. These embodiments are characterized by two molding material supply steps: a core supply step and a subsequent outer layer supply step. The invention is further characterized in that the outer layer molding material is supplied until the tip of the lower center punch takes a position protruding from the tip of the lower outer punch by lowering the lower outer punch, then the whole molding material is compression-molded with the tip of the lower outer punch and the lower center punch aligned with each other. Thereby, the outer layer molding material on the lower outer punch is introduced under the core molding. Applicants respectfully submit that the introduction of the outer layer molding material under the core molding is not obvious and one having ordinary skill in the art would have no reason to introduce of the outer layer molding material under the core molding.

As to the cited art, Applicants respectfully submit that the Office Action reflects a misunderstanding of the cited art. Kondo and Shimada each disclose methods with three molding material supply steps: a first outer layer supply step, a core supply step, and second outer layer supply step. In Kondo and Shimada, the first outer layer supply step is performed prior to the core supply step in all embodiments. The embodiment of Fig. 10 of Shimada is substantially equal to the embodiment of Fig. 1 in Kondo. Further, PD1 in Fig. 10 of Shimada corresponds to OP1 in Fig. 1 of Kondo. Neither PD1 nor OP1 is core molding material. Rather, they are both

outer layer molding materials (shell materials). Furthermore, in Kondo and Shimada, in the outer layer supply step following the core supply step, the outer layer molding material is supplied until the tip of the lower center punch takes a position aligned with the tip of the lower outer punch. The embodiments of Fig. 11 of Shimada and Fig. 3 of Kondo are similar to each other and are different from the embodiments of Fig. 10 in Shimada and Fig. 1 of Kondo. A cup-shaped outer layer is compression-molded first in the embodiments of Fig. 11 of Shimada and Fig. 3 of Kondo, but a bottom part of the outer layer is compression-molded first in the embodiments of Fig. 10 of Shimada and Fig. 1 of Kondo. Additionally, Applicants submit that a difference as compared with the cited art is illustrated in processes F-H in Fig. 2 of the pending application or in processes F-I in Fig. 3 of the pending application. In particular, the processes B-E in Fig. 1 of Kondo are omitted.

Therefore, for at least the above reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that the cited art, either singly or in combination, does not teach a molding with a core can be manufactured by only two molding material supply steps, one core supply step and subsequent one outer layer supply, step. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that the claimed embodiments are patentable over the cited art. Additionally, Applicants herein add new independent claim 24, which recites that the claimed method is a method "consisting essentially of" the recited steps. Applicants respectfully submit that this claim is also patentable over the cited art. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

For at least the foregoing reasons, the claimed invention distinguishes over the cited art and defines patentable subject matter. Favorable reconsideration is earnestly solicited.

Application No. 10/578,528
Art Unit: 1791

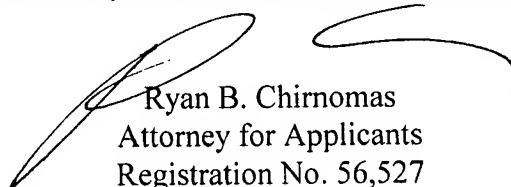
Amendment
Attorney Docket No. 062492

If the Examiner deems that any further action by applicants would be desirable to place the application in condition for allowance, the Examiner is encouraged to telephone applicants' undersigned attorney.

If this paper is not timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. The fees for such an extension or any other fees that may be due with respect to this paper may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-2866.

Respectfully submitted,

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